United Nations S/PV.4323 (Resumption 1)

# Security Council

Fifty-sixth year

*Provisional*

## 4323rd meeting

Wednesday, 30 May 2001, 3.30 p.m.
New York

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *President:* | Mr. Cunningham | (United States of America) |
| *Members:* | Bangladesh | Mr. Chowdhury |
| | China | Mr. Wang Yingfan |
| | Colombia | Mr. Valdivieso |
| | France | Mr. Levitte |
| | Ireland | Mr. Cooney |
| | Jamaica | Mr. Ward |
| | Mali | Mr. Kassé |
| | Mauritius | Mr. Neewoor |
| | Norway | Mr. Kolby |
| | Russian Federation | Mr. Lavrov |
| | Singapore | Mr. Mahbubani |
| | Tunisia | Mr. Jerandi |
| | Ukraine | Mr. Kuchinsky |
| | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | Sir Jeremy Greenstock |

## Agenda

The situation in the Great Lakes region

Report of the Security Council mission to the Great Lakes region, 15-26 May 2001 (S/2001/521)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

01-39045 (E)

*The meeting was resumed at 3.35 p.m.*

**Mr. Ward** (Jamaica): As a member of the Security Council mission, I endorse fully the statement made by Ambassador Levitte in introducing the mission's report. I pay tribute to his leadership and I join in the commendation he offered to the Secretariat and to the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC).

I also wish to thank the Secretary-General for giving special emphasis to a number of the issues highlighted in the mission's report. I would like to emphasize a few basic points.

As Ambassador Levitte has pointed out, there are serious human rights and humanitarian concerns throughout the Democratic Republic of the Congo. There is particular concern with regard to areas being evacuated by the disengagement of forces and to areas to which the forces will withdraw. The deployment of human rights observers and MONUC, as indicated by the Secretary-General, should help to assure the people of our concern and of our determination that peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo must also mean that they can live in safety and security. Our concerns are duly reflected in paragraph 123 of our report.

We have also emphasized in paragraph 126, as further elaborated by Ambassador Levitte, the importance of the national dialogue's moving forward as rapidly as possible. The national dialogue will no doubt move quickly to determine the nature and organization of civil administration in the areas of withdrawal.

I should like to place special emphasis on paragraph 131 of our report. We insist that all parties fully respect the human rights of the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We have called for the immediate demobilization of child soldiers and for their reintegration into society. The recruitment of child soldiers must end. Actions taken by the parties in this regard must be verifiable. It should also be clear to all that impunity for war crimes will not be tolerated and that war criminals must be held accountable.

I had dared to hope that Member States engaged in the conflict, some of whose representatives spoke before us today, would use this opportunity to give us some assurances that the issue of child soldiers will receive their immediate attention. Quite frankly, I am disappointed that some delegations here have used this most important milestone in the peace process to be belligerent rather than to seek ways to advance the process. The peace process is far too advanced for parties to the conflict to be hurling verbal darts at each other. I urge them to calm their rhetoric and to speak of peace and reconciliation. This is not an occasion for recriminations. As the representative of South Africa clearly stated this morning in her statement:

> "as the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo trade their guns for peace, they will be able to focus their energies on the reconstruction of their country" (*supra*).

Peace and security in the region are our objective. I welcome the withdrawal plan detailed by Uganda and urge others to follow. I support MONUC in providing whatever assistance is needed to facilitate Uganda's early withdrawal.

In conclusion, I would like to confirm that no party to the conflict and no country in the region must be allowed to create obstacles to or otherwise hinder the progress of peace. Any negative response to the peace process must be dealt with firmly and decisively by the international community. There must be no equivocation where this is concerned. We must all work together to end the suffering of the Congolese people.

**Sir Jeremy Greenstock** (United Kingdom): I think that the mission report and Ambassador Levitte's oral report this morning have said almost all that we need to say about the work of the mission, what we found and what we now need to do. I hope that the Council as a whole will act swiftly and with determination on the recommendations that we put forward.

Along with everybody else on the mission, I am still left in admiration of Ambassador Levitte's leadership, both on the substance and on the spirit of the mission. I pay that tribute to him again today.

I also think that we were remarkably well served by the United Nations family on the ground and by the members of the Secretariat who came with us. This was the largest, the longest and, paradoxically, the smoothest mission that I have been on so far, including my own. I think that the whole team played a remarkable game.

What did we achieve? I think that time and events will have to tell us what we achieved. We are looking

at a glass half full, in that all the parties decided to tell us — I think with reasonable conviction — that they believed in Lusaka and would implement Lusaka. But we also heard nuances from all of them about where they would like to swing Lusaka their way. I entirely agree with Ambassador Ward on what he has just said — that we could have heard some more positive spirit from the parties in the debate this morning; and some of them are absent from the continuation of the debate now. This is the parties' interest, this is the interest of the people in the region: to take the opportunity of our focused interest and determination to follow up to bring peace to the Great Lakes region.

We all know perfectly well that parties will be tempted to squeeze advantage out of the next stages of implementation for their singular interests. But the international community is looking at the region as a whole, and we, the international community, are not going to be prepared to invest, politically and economically, in the widest sense of the word invest, in one or another country in that region unless the stability and prosperity of the whole region is a real prospect. There is therefore no point in any one party pursuing its own interests at the expense of neighbours or of the region as a whole. They will get two things out of that. One, I hope, will be the Security Council breathing very heavily down their necks, and perhaps worse. We have shown that we can bite, both on this mission and with our follow-up to the Panel's report; so they will get a negative reaction from us and others in the international community.

But it is also short-sighted in terms of the interests, in the medium-to-long term, of any one country to ignore the need to bring its neighbours positively forward with it. I think that is a very important message that we should send out of today's debate. We are not letting go. We will crack down on people who offend against the letter and spirit of Lusaka. We will go back to the region. And we will make sure that those promises made to us by each of the parties that they would implement Lusaka properly and carry out the plans in the Political Committee's deliberations properly will be fulfilled. We will mark them on that.

So I will not go over the individual points. We all know what they are. I want to place an emphasis on Kisangani and the symbolism that it would represent for Kisangani to come out of its shadows and its immediate problems — which are partly relieved by the Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie (RCD-Goma) but also partly contributed to by it — and show, as the third city of the Congo, that a quick advance there would inject an enormous amount of further spirit into the whole peace implementation process.

I, too, pay tribute to the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC). I think that Ambassador Morjane, as he comes towards the end of his tenure, has done a remarkable job. We will be lucky if the Secretary-General finds someone as good to follow him. But finding someone as good to follow him is a very important next step among next steps that have to be taken by the United Nations family.

Like others, I am more depressed on Burundi. I do not think that any of the parties are really contributing as they should be to the peace process, neither the current Government, nor any of the 19 signatories, nor the non-signatories especially. But they, too, will have to remember the warning that we gave them: that there is no point whatsoever in the continuation of armed force, not least because one only, in that way, gives justification to one's enemies to use armed force or to stay in the positions where they are relying on armed force.

I think that a unitary negotiating mechanism for Burundi is essential. Whoever Madiba intends to bring into it, he or she must be under his direction or under the direction of any successor that he approves of with the Secretary-General and the Organization for African Unity. There is also a need for regional input, and I am very glad to hear today that President Museveni is indeed intending to call a meeting in Arusha of the regional initiative in the early days of June. That is good news as follow-up to our mission, in that respect.

Finally, I entirely agree with the Secretary-General's very well-balanced input this morning and where he ended, which is that the parties are in the lead. It is their region and their responsibility, but we, the Security Council, have shown that we are serious. In the weeks and months to come we have got to double that representation of seriousness if we are to draw the positive out of what we have done in the last two weeks and to scotch the negative. So let us move forward on all of this together with that kind of determination.

**Mr. Jerandi** (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): I certainly want to thank you, Mr. President, for having organized this meeting. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for the important statement he delivered this morning. Allow me also to thank Ambassador Levitte for his introduction of the report of the mission the Security Council sent to the Great Lakes region, and to reiterate our great appreciation for the sense of leadership he demonstrated throughout the visit as head of the Council's delegation. The briefing given by Ambassador Levitte faithfully reflects both the assessment and the expectations of the Council with regard to the prospects for peace in the region.

We have listened attentively to all the statements made by the representatives of the countries concerned. Their participation in this meeting is for us of great importance in that it is another positive contribution to our discussions with the leaders and parties of the region. It also shows the possibility of continuing the discussions here in New York.

The visit was undoubtedly a success in so far as it made it possible to achieve certain objectives that the Council had set for itself in its various resolutions and in the mission's mandate. We are pleased to note that the ceasefire is still holding, that the disengagement process is under way, that the deployment of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) has taken certain important steps, that the withdrawal of foreign forces from Congolese territory is in progress, and that the inter-Congolese dialogue will begin on 16 July with a preparatory meeting.

In other words, the progressive momentum generated by this mission made it possible to clarify the positions of one and all on substantive issues related to the implementation of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement, which, during the mission, benefited from a new impetus and from the unconditional support of the different parties to the Agreement. We welcome that impetus, and it should be maintained and closely monitored by the Council because the process remains fragile and requires all the parties involved to fully assume their responsibilities in order to avoid any slippage, which would be very harmful to the entire region.

There are still important aspects of this process that must be settled, namely, the definitive withdrawal of the foreign troops from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as stipulated in resolution 1304 (2000), and the establishment of a civilian administration in the areas to be evacuated by the military forces. We consider that the parties concerned must scrupulously fulfil their commitments in this regard. The partnership established just last year and strengthened this year between the Security Council and the Political Committee has been extremely useful, because it has allowed a direct and frank dialogue between all of the stakeholders and made it possible to overcome certain difficulties in the peace process. The recent Security Council mission cemented this partnership in the interest of peace and security in the region and was able to properly gauge the intensive and commendable efforts made in very difficult working conditions by all the personnel of MONUC and the Representative of the Secretary-General, Ambassador Morjane.

As for Burundi, the mission of the Council conveyed very clear messages to the different Burundian parties on the need to continue dialogue and to end all forms of violence. The Council is aware of the difficulties of the internal process, and those difficulties could worsen with the evolution of the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Council must remain vigilant in this regard, but the parties concerned in Burundi are also called upon to grasp the opportunities for peace that are offered to them in the framework of the Arusha talks, with the facilitation of Nelson Mandela, and also through a standing follow-up mechanism entrusted with the ongoing monitoring of the situation.

The results of the Council's mission will require ongoing assessment in the light of the evolution of the situation and the implementation by the different parties of their obligations. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo as well as in Burundi, the mission was convinced that the peoples of the region aspire to real and irreversible peace. The international community must help them in their quest with political assistance and also with short-term economic assistance, as Ambassador Levitte spoke of with respect to the quick-impact projects, and with long-term economic assistance to ensure lasting peace and lasting prosperity, going hand in hand.

**Mr. Kuchinsky** (Ukraine): First of all, I would like to join my colleagues in thanking you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting of the Security Council, which will allow members not only to assess the results of the Security Council mission to

the Great Lakes regions, but also to consider practical measures aimed at an early settlement of the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in the region as a whole.

I would also like to express our gratitude to Ambassador Levitte for introducing the mission's report and to pay vibrant tribute to him for his skilful and wise leadership of the mission and for his perseverance, courage and tolerance, which greatly contributed to the success of the mission. The Security Council mission was very well prepared and organized. The retreat of the Council members of 5-6 May 2001, which was entirely devoted to the situation in the Great Lakes region, gave additional impetus to the preparation of the mission.

My delegation has always favoured the Security Council's missions to conflict areas. The timely and fruitful visit of the Council Members to the Great Lakes region has entirely proved that this is the right approach. The Security Council missions have passed the test of time. They have become an effective means of conflict settlement and will undoubtedly enhance the authority of the Council as a major body responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security.

The mission to the Great Lakes region has received a clear picture of the situation on the ground and grasped a better understanding of the problems existing in the region. The delegation members are convinced there is a window of opportunity that should be extensively used to settle the conflict in this area.

There is a common understanding by the parties that the Lusaka peace Agreement remains the only viable key to restoring peace and democracy in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The inter-Congolese dialogue has received a strong impetus, the process of the disengagement of forces is moving forward, and the plans were confirmed for disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation or resettlement (DDRRR), as well as for the total withdrawal of all foreign forces from the Democratic Republic of the Congo's territory. These are some of the results of the visit by the mission.

These developments give us good reason for optimism, but I would agree with my colleagues that it should be a very cautious optimism, because many problems still persist.

As for the plans for DDRRR of the negative forces and the plans for the total withdrawal of all foreign forces adopted by the Political Committee, many details remain to be worked out. It seems that the countries of the region have now gathered sufficient political will to advance the peace process. Still, it is essential that they prove their will by taking the necessary practical steps in the spirit of compromise.

The United Nations support for this process is, of course, indispensable, but it is imperative that the parties themselves realize that the process should be carried out against the background of close contacts and cooperation between themselves, in particular between Presidents, specifically between President Kabila and President Kagame. United Nations assistance would be provided taking into account the level of commitment demonstrated by the parties. We call upon all the actors and all the parties to the conflict to again revitalize their bilateral contacts to ensure the necessary level of cooperation.

As was already noted by my colleagues, the issue of safety and security of the civilian population in the areas to be evacuated after the withdrawal of foreign forces is becoming extremely critical. This is not an easy and simple task. We believe that the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo should take responsibility for establishing in those areas the necessary civilian administration, including a police presence.

As for the set of economic issues, we think that one of the important results of the mission is the reopening of the River Congo for commercial navigation and the imminent arrival of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) riverine unit, which will permit the re-establishment of links between Kinshasa, Mbandaka and Kisangani. It will also have a positive effect on confidence-building and on the strengthening of a sense of national unity.

Among the most urgent issues to be resolved is the problem of demilitarization of the city of Kisangani, as was mentioned by many delegates. The continuous presence of the armed elements of the Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie (RCD) is a violation of Security Council resolution 1304 (2000). We urge the RCD leaders to implement fully the provisions of the disengagement plan and to withdraw immediately from Kisangani.

Without delay, we believe there should be an end to the looting of natural resources in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which is closely linked to continuation of the conflict. We again call upon all the countries concerned to cooperate with the Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources as it continues its inquiries and completes its final report.

Solving these and other important problems in this context is absolutely indispensable in terms of the Security Council's consideration of the concept of phase III of the MONUC deployment. Phase III is all-important for advancing the settlement process not only in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, but in Burundi and in the region as a whole.

We believe that the Security Council should closely watch how the arrangements made and the results achieved are implemented, paying special attention to the pace of their implementation and ensuring the necessary follow-up actions. Thus, the window of opportunity welcomed by all the parties of the Lusaka peace process will, hopefully, open even wider.

**Mr. Wang Yingfan** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): At present, the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes region is at a critical juncture. It was therefore highly necessary that the Security Council send a mission to visit this region. We appreciate the unremitting efforts made by Ambassador Levitte, as the head of the delegation, from the beginning of the mission until this morning. He also gave us a very helpful briefing on the visit. We believe that Ambassador Levitte contributed to the mission's success and that the visit has indeed achieved results, as expected. It has helped us gain first-hand knowledge of the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes region, to accurately take stock of the situation and to determine our next steps.

The issue of the Democratic Republic of the Congo involves more than one country. Many countries, political parties and armed groups are directly and indirectly involved. The situation is extremely complex. In a region as vast as Africa and in a conflict as complex as this one, the question of the role to be played by the United Nations is a challenge to the United Nations and in particular to the Security Council. The United Nations must take action to implement the outcome of the Millennium Summit and pay more attention to African questions, including peacekeeping in Africa.

I share the views expressed by the British Ambassador. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has fulfilled his tasks in an excellent manner. We hope that the Secretary-General will appoint a worthy successor to the Special Representative.

It must be pointed out that in order for the conflict to come to an early conclusion and in order to move towards peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi and the Great Lakes region, the key is for peace initiatives to come first from the countries involved in the Great Lakes region and all the parties to the conflict, and for all of them to have a genuine will and determination to achieve peace and reconciliation. Peace initiatives must come first from the countries and the various parties of the region. As the Secretary-General pointed out this morning, the leaders in the region should lead the way to peace. It is evident from the mission that all the parties have a genuine desire for peace. However, some parties have not made up their minds to turn this desire into concrete action to implement the Lusaka Agreement and the relevant Security Council resolutions. Therefore, the United Nations and the international community must continue their efforts to ensure the provision of the various resources needed to achieve peace.

Generally speaking, in order to find a solution to the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and to achieve a lasting peace in the Great Lakes region, the key is to promote and achieve internal reconciliation in the countries of the region, as well as a broad-based reconciliation between the countries of the region. Peaceful coexistence can be reached only when reconciliation is achieved at these two levels. Otherwise, even if peace is achieved, it will not last long.

At this time, disengagement and peace have basically been achieved and a window of opportunity has been opened in the peace process. Under these circumstances, we call upon the parties to the conflict to exercise restraint and to refrain from using words or taking actions that might be harmful to peace and reconciliation. Without desire and action for peace and reconciliation, political dialogue, demilitarization, demobilization, resettlement and reintegration and the

withdrawal of foreign troops will encounter great difficulties and obstacles.

Finally, there are a few points that are crucially important to the latest developments, which I would like to emphasize. First, disengagement and a ceasefire have now been achieved in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. There must not be any violation of the disengagement and ceasefire by any party and there must be no backtracking. Secondly, the city of Kisangani must be demilitarized as soon as possible. This is an issue that will determine whether Kisangani can be reached by the River Congo. Thirdly, the River Congo must be reopened to navigation as planned. Fourthly, we must follow the situation in Burundi in order to prevent it from deteriorating.

**Mr. Lavrov** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We have a positive assessment of the Security Council mission to the Great Lakes region. In our view, it helped to strengthen positive tendencies towards settling the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and we join in praising the work of the mission, and particularly the leader of the mission, the Permanent Representative of France, Ambassador Jean-David Levitte.

In our view, encouraging results have been achieved in the peace process of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. There has been a successful deployment of United Nations contingents in phase II of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), with the full cooperation of the Government. The ceasefire is being observed, and generally, despite the well-known problems in the Equateur Province, the process of the disengagement of forces involved in the conflict has begun.

The Security Council mission to the region showed that the relations between the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United Nations and MONUC have shifted from antagonism to a solid and positive partnership. The main problems now facing the United Nations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo are created by the armed opposition. We consider that the policy adopted by the members of the mission in the course of the meetings they held in the region showed convincingly that the time of violating with impunity peace agreements and commitments entered into under Security Council resolutions has ended. The time of plundering the natural wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and committing atrocities against civilians has ended. As a matter of principle it is important that the mission has confirmed the need for the withdrawal of foreign forces from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in accordance with demands set out in Security Council resolutions.

The Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo confirms its commitment to the inter-Congolese dialogue, and the dialogue would certainly benefit from the adoption by the transitional parliament of the law on political parties and social organizations, listing virtually all legal and financial restrictions on political activities in the country. The results of the meeting of the members of the mission with Sir Ketumile Masire showed that the facilitator is also preparing for more concrete and realistic measures in organizing the inter-Congolese dialogue. In this connection, we note that 16 July has been decided as the date for the preparatory meeting for the dialogue.

Evidence of a responsible approach to power was provided in a statement by President Joseph Kabila on 17 May, when he recognized the wretched situation of the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and promised to take steps to improve it. It is the duty of the international community to provide assistance in these efforts, primarily by meeting the urgent humanitarian needs of the population in that nation. Along with moving towards a peaceful settlement, international humanitarian efforts in that country should also be intensified. The Russian side has already informed the leadership of United Nations humanitarian agencies that we are interested and ready to participate in the planned international humanitarian operation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

We think it is important that the mission helped to confirm the principal responsibility of the parties to the conflict for a settlement to it. I think it also showed them a realistic picture of the limits on the assistance that can be provided to them by the United Nations within the context of efforts to find a settlement.

In turn the picture that the participants in the mission got will also help the Council in determining its position as to what the United Nations actually has to do in the Democratic Republic of the Congo as concerns phase III of the peacekeeping operation. We are willing to work towards reaching agreement on a decision in the Council on transiting to phase III of

MONUC, which implies a strengthening of the mission within the context of the authorized numbers of persons involved. We continue to believe that a practical increase in the scope of this operation must be preceded by additional steps by parties to the conflict to implement their respective obligations, primarily in completing the disengagement of forces and ensuring an adequate level of security for United Nations peacekeeping personnel.

As for the Council's consideration of further measures to stop illegal exploitation of the natural resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, this matter is still important, and, in our view, we should continue to consider it, taking into account the reliable and verified information about the dynamics of the situation in this area. As we know, this kind of information is to be submitted to the Council by the Panel of Experts and the Secretary-General.

Russia shares the concern over the danger of a resumption of large-scale violence in Burundi, and it also agrees that there is no military solution to the conflict in that country. We agree with the members of the Security Council mission that there is a need to intensify the efforts of States members of the regional initiative in order to encourage the armed opposition to enter into the dialogue with the Government. Overall, we are willing to support the proposals on strengthening the negotiating mechanisms for Burundi by broadening the role of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General after these proposals have been appropriately discussed and worked through with the international facilitator for the Arusha process, Nelson Mandela.

In conclusion, I would just like to say to all members of the mission that we are grateful to them for the work they have done.

**Mr. Valdivieso** (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, I would like to thank you for having organized this open meeting, in which Council members can inform all Members of the United Nations about the results of our mission to the Great Lakes region. The delegation of Colombia is especially pleased with the presence of friends and colleagues from the African countries that were visited by the mission.

The head of our mission, Ambassador Levitte, has delivered a lucid and eloquent briefing on this topic, and thus there is no need for us to make lengthy comments. However, it is important to acknowledge, as earlier speakers have said, that the success of this mission is largely due to his personal qualities and his effective leadership.

Allow me to make a few brief comments, with which I wish to underscore the commitment of this Council, and of my delegation in particular, to continue working for peace in Africa. It is worthwhile to comment on the fact that the actions taken by the Council enhance the attention that the Economic and Social Council will give to Africa this year in its ministerial segment in Geneva in July, as well as the work of the General Assembly's Ad Hoc Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa, which is currently taking place.

First of all, I believe that our trip through the different capitals of the Great Lakes region and southern Africa, and the contacts that we had with representatives of the peoples and authorities of these countries, have raised expectations as regards future action to be taken by the United Nations. What should be clear to all — and this is what we said to the signatories of the Lusaka and Arusha peace processes — is that our contribution to the common undertaking for peace in Africa is given on the basis of the contributions made by the different parties to the conflicts. This means that there will not be any military solutions. It also means that there will be demobilization of the combatants and that natural resources will be placed at the service of development of the countries. We have taken note of the statements made by the different delegates of the African States who participated in this morning's meeting.

During our stay in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, we were pleased to note the positive role that was played by the United Nations Mission in that country, its members, its leaders and its growing contribution to the peace process. We would like to underscore and pay particular tribute to the efforts of countries that have provided troop contingents in the current phase of operations. All of the military observers and protection units were able to be deployed in their respective sites. The reopening of navigation on the Congo River is a sign of improvement for the Congolese people.

The Security Council hopes that the Government of that country, and all of the parties to the conflict,

will fully comply with their commitments to cooperate with the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In a few days, this Council will begin to review the recommendations of the Secretary-General for the new phase of operations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; and then we will be able to reap the benefits of having taken part in this mission.

With respect to the situation in Burundi, impetus should be given to the dialogue with the rebel groups who remain outside of the Arusha Agreement and for which perhaps it is necessary to establish, in consultation with the facilitator, an ongoing negotiating mechanism based in Bujumbura. The United Nations and the bilateral donors should be ready to offer additional resources and good offices that are required by this strategy.

We should not allow the progress that has been made to disappear. The parties must respect human rights and the standards of international humanitarian law. We will closely follow the situation in this country. Thus we were pleased to hear the representative of Burundi accept the proposal for a bilateral commission with Tanzania on the refugee camps.

Finally, my delegation accords special significance to the effort being carried out within the United Nations system to set the issue of the Great Lakes within a regional perspective. Such a perspective would make it possible to take advantage of the strengths of each of the agencies of the Organization, as well as the participation of the Bretton Woods institutions, during the peace-building phase, which we believe that that region of Africa must arrive at.

**Mr. Kolby** (Norway): The Great Lakes region continues to be among the most important items on the agenda of the Council. My delegation would therefore like to pay tribute to Ambassador Levitte for having headed the Security Council mission to the area. We would also like to thank all the other members for the important work that they have undertaken. We also welcome the statements made this morning by the Secretary-General and the countries of the region. We have listened to their views and will consider them carefully in our further discussions on this important topic.

I would like to reiterate my Government's support for the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement. The mission report confirms our view that this document continues to serve as the key denominator for a sustainable peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The fact that, in spite of recent setbacks and difficulties, the major players in the process have reconfirmed their commitment to the agreement, is indeed an encouraging sign. The challenge ahead is to secure continued support for the implementation of the Agreement as the process of disengagement and withdrawal of forces continues. In this regard, we strongly endorse the view put forward by mission members that the two aspects of the accord — its military provisions and the dialogue — should be conducted in parallel. We also believe the setting of a timetable for implementation would be an appropriate undertaking at this stage.

My delegation is encouraged by the reports that some foreign contingents have already been withdrawn from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and we would strongly urge those that still remain to withdraw their forces in a phased and organized manner, in accordance with the Lusaka Agreement and relevant Security Council resolutions.

Regarding the process of disarmament, demobilization, resettlement and reintegration, we welcome the assurances given to the mission by the Political Committee that the Committee will indeed provide the necessary information on the armed groups in order to facilitate the process. This is a key component of a successful operation, and we therefore urge the Committee to deliver on its promises as soon as possible. I would also like to stress the urgent need for a consolidated effort by donors to support this process. The lasting integration of ex-combatants remains the cornerstone of any peace-building strategy.

My delegation would also like to stress that all the rebel groups in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including the former Rwandan Armed Forces and the Interahamwe, must participate in the process of disarmament, demobilization, resettlement and reintegration. If not, we are afraid that the progress towards sustainable peace has limited hope for success. The continued presence of the negative forces that operate in the region could seriously undermine the efforts to create peace and stability.

My Government welcomes the Secretary-General's decision to increase, in cooperation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights,

the number of human rights observers in the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC). We would also like to stress the need to deal with the issue of impunity and to bring to justice those responsible for the most severe crimes.

The Norwegian Government has provided financial support for the efforts to facilitate the process leading towards the inter-Congolese dialogue, and we are positively inclined towards further support when tangible progress is made on the ground. Thus, it is of crucial importance that all parties concerned, including the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, cooperate closely with Sir Ketumile Masire and support his efforts to advance the dialogue. We welcome President Masire's announcement that a preparatory meeting for the dialogue will be convened on 16 July. Furthermore, we urge the parties to settle the issues of timing, location and the agenda for the dialogue as soon as possible. The people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo have suffered too much for too long. We hope that the international donor community will heed the Secretary-General's appeal today to urgently increase support for the 2001 consolidated appeal. Norway also looks forward to the report of the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, Mr. Olara Otunnu, on the issue of child soldiers.

Turning to Burundi, we would like to make some brief remarks. We certainly share the concern about the situation in the country, as expressed in the mission report. My Government has been among the sponsors of the peace negotiations in Arusha. We therefore commend President Nelson Mandela for his effort to promote the implementation of the Agreement. We must continue to support this mandate for peace. The current situation calls for urgent action, and we would therefore like to see further momentum in the peace process. We therefore look forward to discussions on the idea of strengthening the facilitator's office and broadening the role of the Representative of the Secretary-General, as indicated in the mission report. We would also like to confirm that our humanitarian assistance to the region will remain at a high level for the near future. In our efforts, we will continue to focus mainly on vulnerable groups, such as refugees, internally displaced persons and returnees — the true victims of nearly a decade of armed conflict.

In conclusion, we urge the parties to the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement and the Arusha peace Agreement to maintain the momentum that has been created over the past months, and we are looking forward to further dialogue on the next steps. We would like to remind the belligerents that the main responsibility lies with them. The Security Council cannot bring peace to the region. It can only promote and facilitate a process in which local actors are the key players.

**Mr. Kassé** (Mali) (*spoke in French*): I, too, would like to thank you, Mr. President, for having organized this open briefing so quickly. Through you, I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for the important statement that he made this morning. Mali endorses the report of the Security Council mission to the Great Lakes region. We fully support the statement made this morning by the head of the Security Council mission, the Ambassador of France, Jean-David Levitte, to whom we pay a warm tribute for his excellent work in leading that mission.

Mali actively participated in the Security Council mission, and, having listened carefully to the statements made by earlier speakers this morning, I should just like to make the following points.

On the Lusaka peace process, we welcome the partnership now developing between the Council and the Political Committee of the Lusaka Agreement. The establishment of this partnership — a partnership such as we have always called for between the Security Council and subregional organizations involved in settling conflicts — should be maintained so that the process can move forward, bearing in mind that the parties signatories to the Lusaka Agreement remain the driving force behind that dynamic. We reiterate the appeal to the parties in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to speedily make available to the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) the necessary information so that the post-disengagement stage can begin, with a view to shifting to phase III of the deployment of MONUC.

On the Arusha process, we also appeal to the armed groups, primarily the Front pour la défense de la démocratie (FDD) and the Forces national pour la libération (FNL), to cease hostilities immediately and without conditions, and to join the political process. As in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, there can be no military solution in Burundi. Arusha remains the

viable framework, and it must be preserved, under the leadership of President Mandela. In this regard, we agree with the views expressed earlier by the Ambassador of the United Kingdom.

Lastly, we have already commended the Council for its commitment to the Great Lakes region; we believe that we should now give an impetus to the new negotiating structure established with the Political Committee of the Lusaka Agreement, following the deployment of the MONUC observers.

The Security Council must remain vigilant and must closely monitor the parties' fulfilment of their commitments. Peace may still be far off, but it is now within our grasp.

**Mr. Neewoor** (Mauritius): Thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this meeting so soon after the return of the mission. I am very pleased to associate myself fully with the comprehensive briefing that Ambassador Levitte has given on the Security Council mission, which he led, to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and seven other African countries from 15 to 26 May and in which I had the privilege of participating.

We have addressed the Democratic Republic of the Congo conflict regularly in the Security Council, and all of us are familiar with its complexity. The importance of the mission can be better understood if we realize that it provided an opportunity, after the process had been bogged down for quite some time, for us to move the Lusaka process forward. The mission had an opportunity to interact with the major players, with the leaders of seven of the countries that we visited, and also with the leaders of two other countries, whom we met in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I believe that this interactive process with them was extremely important, as it enabled both sides much better to understand the concerns we have.

All the parties involved in the Democratic Republic of the Congo conflict recognize, as does the Security Council, that the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement is the only basis for the achievement of a peaceful settlement of the Democratic Republic of the Congo crisis. In the course of meetings with the leaders of the countries concerned and with other parties, the Security Council mission was left in no doubt that the parties remain fully committed to the Lusaka process. We are satisfied that, at the Political Committee meeting in Lusaka last week, the parties to the Lusaka Agreement engaged in serious discussions on the withdrawal of all foreign forces from the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We remain cautiously optimistic that the timetable worked out in Lusaka for a phased and orderly withdrawal from the Democratic Republic of the Congo will be scrupulously adhered to by all the parties concerned.

We welcome the announcement by Sir Ketumile Masire that the preparatory conference on starting the national dialogue will begin on 16 July. The success of the national dialogue is paramount in terms of the overall settlement of the Democratic Republic of the Congo crisis. All the Congolese parties we met appear to be eager to participate in the national dialogue, but we know that this is not going to be easy, since each party has a separate agenda of its own and since a commonality of purpose remains to evolve.

The mission was reminded again and again during its visit that, so long as the negative forces remain active on the soil of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, peace will remain threatened in the Great Lakes region. It is therefore extremely important that the United Nations take up its responsibility for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration under the Lusaka Agreement as soon as possible. Time will tell whether the 5,500-odd-person strength of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) will be sufficient for it to meet its responsibilities under phase III, especially in terms of effectively undertaking the process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration in addition to its other responsibilities. The Security Council must not hesitate to enhance the strength of MONUC if the need is felt as the process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration progresses.

Regarding Burundi, the present situation appears to be quite explosive in view of the refusal of the armed groups to join the peace process. In that regard, the Security Council should continue to extend its full cooperation to former President Nelson Mandela, who is doing everything possible to bring peace to Burundi under the Arusha Agreement.

**Mr. Cooney** (Ireland): I would like to start, if I may, by thanking the Governments and the heads of State who received us for their warm welcome to the region, and for the long hours they devoted to our mission during the time we were there. I would also

like to thank the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) and the United Nations representatives in the region for the organization of the visit and, indeed, to pay tribute to the courage and dedication of those people, who are out in the field a long way from home, in a situation that can often be dangerous. Like others, I must echo the special tribute to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Kamel Morjane, and to the Representative of the Secretary-General in Burundi, Mr. Jean Arnault, for the tremendous work they are doing in the area.

I cannot let the occasion pass without offering praise to the leader of the mission, Ambassador Levitte, who led the mission with a combination of delicacy and élan which perhaps only a Frenchman could conjure up. Nevertheless, it was a very special performance.

Having repeated what a lot of the others have already said, let me say that one of the main features of our mission was that, in the wide and varied contributions we made, we managed rarely to repeat ourselves. So I will not go through all the points that many of my colleagues have raised. But I would like to offer one or two reflections.

First of all, let me speak of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where I think the general consensus is that we are seeing good progress. I think the mission was impressed by the greater openness of President Joseph Kabila and indeed by the positive and warm chemistry amongst the members of the Political Committee of the Lusaka Agreement, which, I think, gives us hope and which I personally feel is a much better gauge of the prospects for the future than the hostile and sterile rhetoric that ricocheted around the region while we were there and of which we heard rather unfortunate echoes this morning. I think we were particularly encouraged during our mission by the growing consensus that long-term stability in the region depends on the dismantling, through disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation, of the so-called negative forces operating in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I think it is important to realize that we are reaching a delicate stage in this process. The violence is more or less over, but at the moment the Democratic Republic of the Congo is effectively divided into three zones under three separate administrations, each with its own foreign backers. The time is arriving when those in control of those zones —the Government in Kinshasa, the Front de libération du Congo (FLC) and the Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie (RCD (Goma)) — will be called upon to demonstrate their courage and indeed their patriotism by engaging fully and without reservation in the inter-Congolese dialogue. It is important that all those parties subscribe to our wish, which is to see the reintegration of the national territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the assumption by the Congolese people, at long last, of control over their own political and economic destiny.

I took careful note of what was said this morning by the Secretary-General on the need for a substantial increase in economic and humanitarian support to the Democratic Republic of the Congo; I can only say that we saw ample evidence of the need for that support during our visit to the region.

On Burundi, again I share the general consensus that the situation is indeed precarious. There is an urgent need to address the differences between the parties and to overcome what are in effect mutually exclusive preconditions, which are blocking the road to peace.

I would echo Ireland's full support for the facilitator, Mr. Nelson Mandela, and would agree on the usefulness of reinforcing the resources of the Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Jean Arnaud, in Bujumbura. I can only stress and repeat the message which the mission conveyed to the Front pour la défense de la démocratie and the Forces nationales pour la libération that the opportunity exists now to respond to the appeals of the Security Council mission and to engage in dialogue in an atmosphere free from violence. This is an opportunity which, frankly, it would be foolish to spurn.

**Mr. Mahbubani** (Singapore): Since I began the proceedings this morning on a slightly discordant note, I would like to ensure that they end on a sweet note. I would like to explain to Ambassador Jean-David Levitte that my intervention was not intended in any way to spoil the atmosphere. From time to time, however, after 20 years of experience in multilateral work, I have discovered that, sometimes, to make strong substantive points, you have to raise procedural issues. But this will be pursued in informal consultations.

I am actually very happy to be the last speaker because, as the last speaker, I can happily endorse and reconfirm all the thanks and tributes that have been paid. Indeed, I can say that, from my personal point of view, as someone who was not scheduled to go on the mission and was a last-minute addition, I was very pleased to be included, because, frankly, it was both personally and professionally one of the most rewarding experiences I have had. It was professionally rewarding, as many have said, thanks to the leadership of Ambassador Levitte of this mission. He was truly dedicated and indefatigable and, as I said in informal consultations yesterday, he makes Singaporeans look lazy in comparison.

I just want to add three points which I hope will help to complement some of the points that have been made in the discussion so far.

The first point is that I think the phrase that has been used most frequently today in the discussion of our mission has been "window of opportunity". I hope, however, that we will all be aware that windows of opportunity are, almost by definition, fragile and fleeting. You do not have windows of opportunity in areas of light and hope; you have windows of opportunity in areas of doom and gloom. Therefore, it is important that, after this mission, if we have achieved any positive results, we maintain the momentum.

In this regard, several speakers have pointed to many individual elements that are encouraging: the ceasefire, the disengagement, the withdrawal of foreign forces and the inter-Congolese dialogue. All these elements, however, add up to a larger process and it is important that the larger process keep moving on, in addition to all the individual elements. In this regard, I should like to mention that perhaps, for me and as hinted by our colleague from Ireland a few minutes ago, one of the most encouraging meetings was the one we had with the signatories of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement. No doubt, a lot depends on the actions of the signatories. In this regard, hopefully, in our meeting with them, we have developed what I would call a healthy symbiotic relationship: they, in a sense, take positive actions that lead to positive responses from the Council. Of course, if they do not, if they take negative steps again and again, as our colleague from Ireland hinted a few minutes ago, if there is a repetition of the negative rhetoric instead of the positive words that we heard at the meeting in Lusaka, that could in turn create a negative, vicious circle.

Thus, I hope that the positive results of this mission will not be fleeting and that they will persist. Again, as I said in the informal consultations yesterday, there is some obligation on our part, having gone on the mission, to ensure that there is follow-up and that whatever concrete follow-up action is needed is taken in the next month or so.

My second point is on Burundi. Here, I hope that, even though the report has come out only today and I doubt whether many people have had time to read it in full, some attention will be paid to the first sentence of paragraph 133, which actually conveys a very strong statement. It says:

> "The mission was struck by the complexity and intractability of the situation in Burundi, and its serious potential for large-scale violence." (*S/2001/521, para. 133*)

This, I would say, is a very strong warning to the Council and, insofar as the Council has Charter responsibilities, I hope its members will take note of that sentence.

At the same time, I hope that they will also take note of paragraphs 39 to 45, which describe — I think well — the conversation that members of the mission had with Mr. Jean-Bosco Ndayikengurukiye, as well as paragraphs 88 and 89 on the meetings with the Forces nationales pour la libération, at which I think the members of the mission tried, with as much persuasive force as they had, to send a signal to both these parties that they have to come aboard the Arusha process, that they should renounce violence and that they should join the rest on the road of peace. I sincerely hope that these messages have had an impact and I am glad that, in the review that we have had today, virtually every speaker has stressed the importance of paying very careful attention to the Burundi question.

My third and final point is on the question of Security Council missions. Here, I am, in a sense, following up what our colleague from Ukraine said. It was, as we have all agreed, a successful mission, but if it was successful, perhaps we should try to reflect on why it was successful. I hope in this regard that the Security Council will try to become more self-reflective as an institution, because it neither reflects on its failures — including such spectacular failures as

Rwanda and Srebrenica — nor on its successes. Now, however, that we have a valuable success story, we should try to study why this mission was successful. Here, to get the discussion going, let me suggest five factors which I think helped to ensure that the mission was a success.

The first and most important one — and I am glad that several people have emphasized this — is leadership. Here, I would like to tell Ambassador Jean-David Levitte that his work is not complete — he has to write the manual on how to lead missions for all future mission leaders.

Secondly, we clearly need unity of purpose. Here, I believe that Ambassador Greenstock said that it was remarkable that this was probably one of the largest Security Council missions ever sent out and yet one of the most cohesive. It was the combination of large size and cohesiveness that I think added to the impact of the mission wherever we went.

Thirdly, I think the mission should be given a realistic mandate. Wherever we went, we tried to ensure that we neither raised expectations nor dampened them. We tried, I think, each in his own way, to give a very realistic picture of what the Council could and could not do to ensure that, at the end of the day, there were no unrealistic expectations of it. That is very important, because if the Council does not do that and people expect some major actions, they might, in a sense, miscalculate their own responsibilities in the situation.

The fourth factor is timing. I guess we had the good fortune that, this year, several positive developments led to a change of attitude among many of the key parties involved in these issues. In that sense, the timing of our mission, I think, was just right in providing just the right boost to build on the positive developments that have taken place since January this year. I think this is a point to bear in mind when we send out missions in the future.

Fifthly and finally, and I am glad that several speakers have spoken about this, this was a very good mission with regard to the political, logistical and administrative support given by the entire United Nations family. I would say that we were truly impressed by what they did wherever we went, not just in terms of supporting our mission but also in terms of the work that they were doing on the ground. We saw this while visiting a town like Mbandaka and seeing how, from virtually nothing, the United Nations had built an infrastructure to accommodate its contingents, and that had given a tremendous boost in confidence. I think that sort of contribution on the ground is rarely noticed. The tragedy here, of course, is that the United Nations never gets sufficient credit for the contribution that it makes. I think it is quite clear, both from the mission and from the work on the ground, that the United Nations has actually made many positive contributions, which we hope the international community will take note of. To those who want to deny that, I would challenge them to come and do a better job than what the United Nations has done in this region.

**The President**: I would now like to make a brief statement in my national capacity.

I think that the discussion here today shows that there is strong agreement among Council members, and a consensus of views, about the situation in the region. I know that message was sent by the mission under Ambassador Levitte's leadership, which has been widely complimented. I join in complimenting him.

I hope that message is heard again today by the countries in the region via our discussion. I do not want to rehash the substance, or review the full agenda, of what others have laid out. It is all there. I want to note that the prominence that the Secretary-General attached to the humanitarian situation in his remarks should strike us all and encourage efforts to help deal with it. This year, the United States intends to spend almost $70 million on humanitarian assistance in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and we hope others will join in that effort.

On the agenda before us, I think the task is clear and that the message is that we need to get on with it and, more importantly, that the parties need to get on with it. I think the Council has always been very clear, and my delegation is very clear, that the Security Council will help if they help themselves and if they take the responsibility that they need to exercise. All must act, or all will continue to suffer. That is also very clear.

The true success of the mission — which was a success, I agree — will be in the follow-up and performance that we see in the coming months. My delegation looks forward to working with others around the table to encourage that.

I now resume my functions as the President of the Council.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

*The meeting rose at 4.55 p.m.*